

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 This invention provides a methodology for negotiating  
parameters in a distributed computing environment. The  
invention may be implemented in a way which is simple,  
general and robust. Leasing, deadlock detection and  
starvation detection may be provided. The invention may be  
applied to automatic configuration of networked devices and  
their services. In one embodiment, devices on a computer  
10 network provide services. In each instance where one  
service imports functionality from another service a finite  
state machine associated with each service is instantiated.  
The finite state machines exchange messages which cause  
them to progress through a sequence of states. The messages  
15 contain configuration data. When the finite state machines  
have reached their final states the functionality in question is  
made available to the importing service. The finite state  
machines enforce incremental negotiation. The finite state  
machines also provide smooth recovery from errors and  
20 interruptions in network availability.

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